



WASHINGTON OZAUKEE
PUBLIC HEALTH DEPARTMENT

Annual Report

2020

The past year was incredibly difficult for the Washington Ozaukee Public Health Department as well as our community. WOPHD staff displayed exemplary leadership and dedication in their response to the Covid-19 pandemic. No one could have imagined the sacrifice and challenge we would face in an effort to first stop and then mitigate the impact Covid-19 has had on the health and well-being of our residents. The WOPHD staff and our community should be commended for their effort to save lives. We will be facing the continued trials and tribulations of Covid-19 through 2021 and likely for years to come. WOPHD Covid-19 response is outlined in more detail at the end of our 2020 Annual Report.

The 2020 Washington Ozaukee Public Health Department (WOPHD) 2020 Annual Report is developed and rooted in the 10 Essential Public Health Services. The 10 Essential Public Health Services guide our daily work and remind us of the responsibilities we, as the public health department, have to our community in protecting and promoting health. We extend deep appreciation to all of our community partners who work diligently with us to sustain and improve the health of Washington County and Ozaukee County residents.

Thank you for supporting WOPHD in 2020 and your continued support in years to come.

Kirsten Johnson
Health Officer

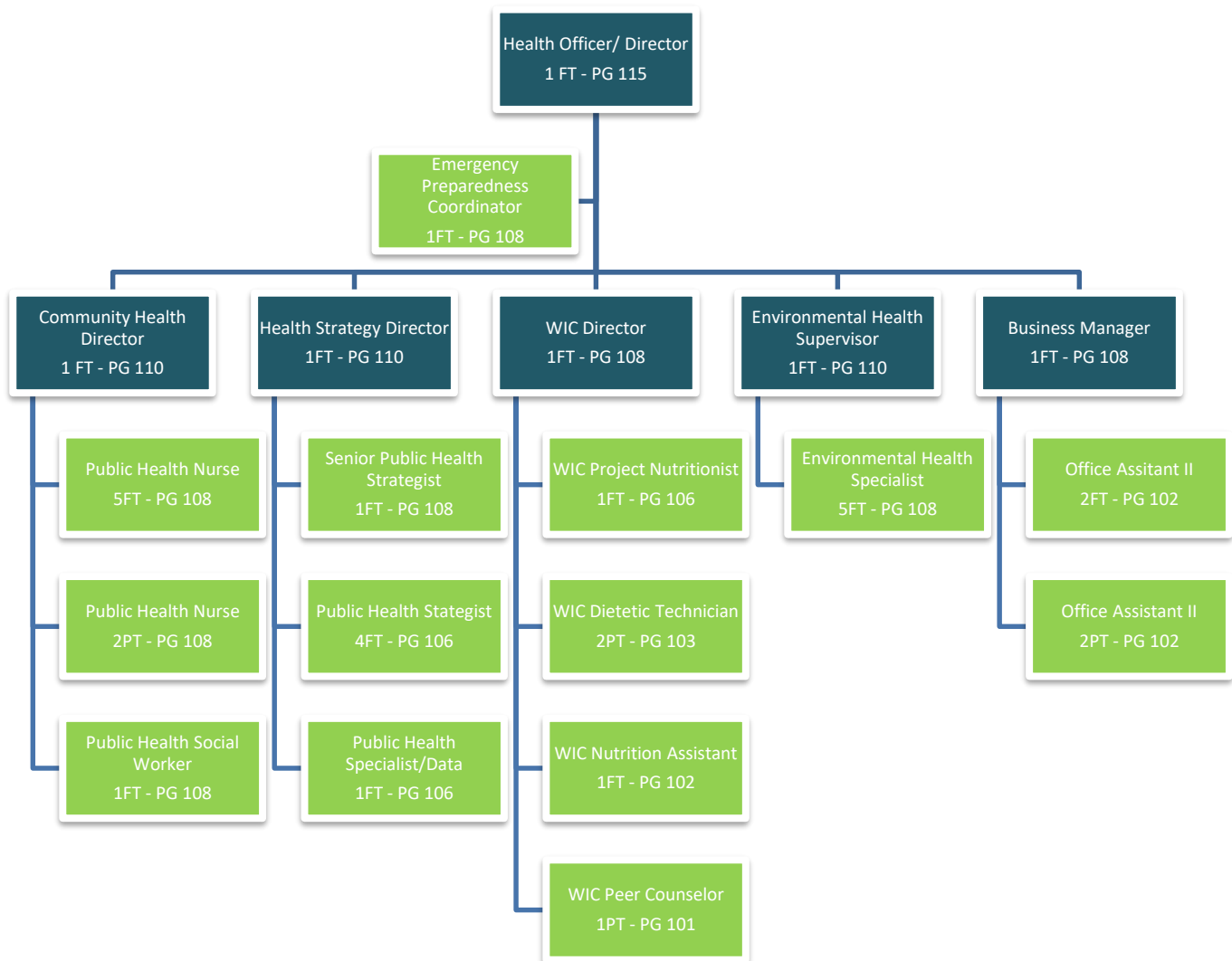
Washington Ozaukee Public Health Department

Annual Report 2020

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Organization Chart



Washington Ozaukee Joint Board of Health

Washington County Representatives

Don Kriefall, County Board Chair
Kris Deiss, County Board Member
Lois Krueger-Gundrum, County Board Member
Doreen Buntrock, Citizen Member
Travis Dowden, Citizen Member

Ozaukee County Representatives

Kathlyn Geracie, County Board Member
Donald Clark, County Board Member
Cathy Cero-Jaeger, Citizen Member
Nitish Bangalore, Citizen Member

Dr. Steven Zils, Aurora, Medical Advisor



WASHINGTON OZAUKEE PUBLIC HEALTH DEPARTMENT

Washington Ozaoukee Public Health Department (WOPHD)

Vision & Mission

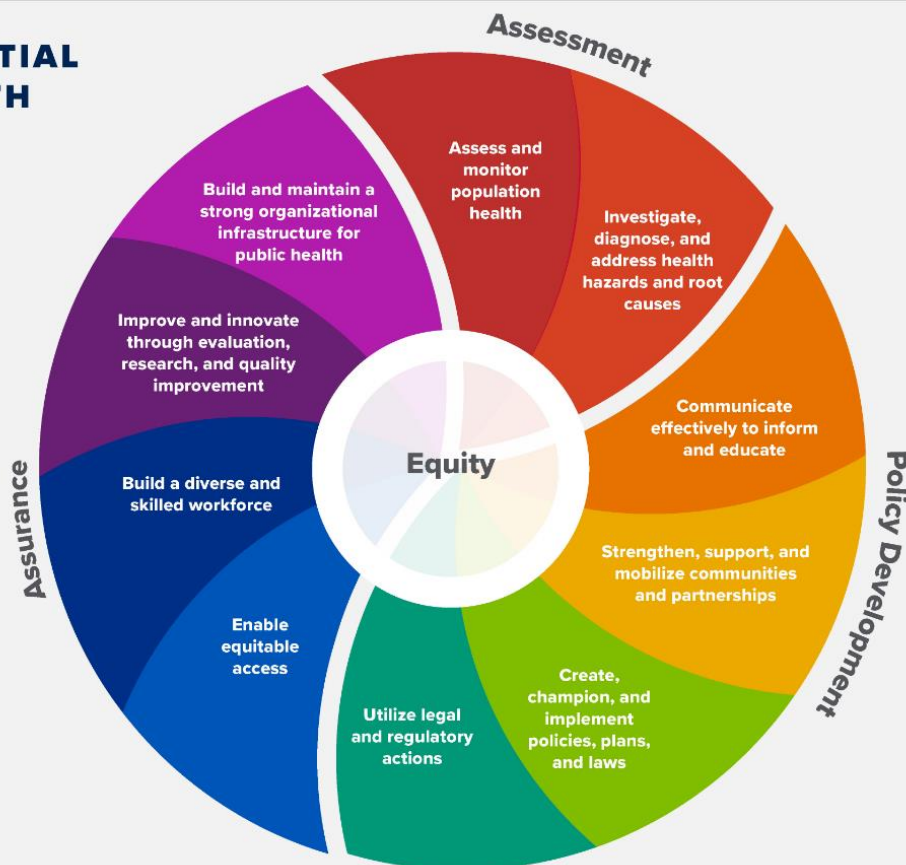
Vision: To be innovators in fostering healthy people, places and communities.

Mission: Improve quality of life by promoting, protecting and enhancing the health and well-being of the public.

THE 10 ESSENTIAL PUBLIC HEALTH SERVICES

*To protect and promote
the health of all people in
all communities*

The 10 Essential Public Health Services provide a framework for public health to protect and promote the health of all people in all communities. To achieve optimal health for all, the Essential Public Health Services actively promote policies, systems, and services that enable good health and seek to remove obstacles and systemic and structural barriers, such as poverty, racism, gender discrimination, and other forms of oppression, that have resulted in health inequities. Everyone should have a fair and just opportunity to achieve good health and well-being.



Created 2020

Essential Service 1

Assess and monitor population health status, factors that influence health, and community needs and assets

Essential Service 1 activities include assessing the health status of the community through formal and informal needs assessments and data analysis. The Washington Ozaukee Public Health Department collaborates with a broad group of community partners to address our health needs. Community health improvement planning and leading health indicator data guide our health focus areas.

Washington and Ozaukee Health Status

Annually, the County Health Rankings collect data for every county in the United States and provide a state ranking. In 2020, Ozaukee was ranked the 2nd healthiest county in Wisconsin and Washington was ranked the 3rd healthiest.

2020 -- Outcomes

- Despite the high rankings, health data of concern are the percentage of adults who smoke, are obese, drink excessively (defined as adults who report binge or heavy drinking in the past 30 days) and the number of self-reported poor mental health days.

Health Indicator	Washington	Ozaukee	Wisconsin
Adult Smokers	14%	13%	16%
Obese Adults	33%	24%	31%
Excessive Drinking	28%	25%	24%
Poor Mental Health Days/Month	3.4	3.2	4.0

Essential Service 2

Investigate, diagnose, and address health problems and hazards affecting the population

Essential service 2 includes provision of epidemiological identification of emerging health threats, investigation of infectious disease and human health hazards and prevention of disease through immunizations.

Communicable Disease Control

Surveillance, investigation and follow-up of reportable diseases are statutory responsibilities of local health departments. Follow up is conducted to assure measures are taken to prevent potential disease transmission.

2020 Outcomes

- Public Health Nurses conducted **1196** follow-up investigations on reportable communicable diseases in Washington County and **826** in Ozaukee County

- **19** TB Skin Tests were administered in Washington County and **23** in Ozaukee County

<i>Sample of Diseases</i>	<i>WC</i>	<i>OC</i>
<i>Arboviral</i>	0	1
<i>Campylobacter</i>	19	13
<i>Cryptosporidium</i>	3	4
<i>E.Coli</i>	5	2
<i>Food/Water Outbreak</i>	5	4
<i>Giardia</i>	7	8
<i>Hep A</i>	0	1
<i>Hep B</i>	3	4
<i>Hep C</i>	32	16
<i>Lyme Disease</i>	107	48
<i>Mumps</i>	0	0
<i>Salmonella</i>	10	6
<i>STDs:</i>		
<i>Chlamydia</i>	231	114
<i>Gonorrhea</i>	58	27
<i>TB Active</i>	0	0
<i>Latent TB</i>	39	23
<i>Varicella</i>	4	4

Emergency Preparedness

The WOPHD is focused on maintaining a proactive emergency preparedness response. Implicit in this goal is the need to cultivate and sustain robust planning and response capabilities. The development of these capabilities is fostered in conjunction with contract objectives associated with Public Health Emergency Preparedness (PHEP) and Cities Readiness Initiative (CRI) grant funding. Taken together, these efforts place WOPHD in a position to enhance the safety of our community by maintaining an effective all-hazards preparedness program.

2020 Outcomes

- Met the objectives levied by PHEP and CRI grant funding agreements. Some of these objectives include:
 - Ensuring all staff have a minimum level of Incident Command System (ICS) training
 - Maintaining a jurisdictional administrator for volunteer management programs
 - Participation in the regional Healthcare Emergency Readiness Coalition (HERC)
 - Conducting inclusive risk planning for the whole community, including vulnerable populations
- Conducted a successful Table Top Exercise (TTX) based on a Closed Point of Dispensing (POD) activation in response to an anthrax attack
 - The TTX participants included personnel from 16 organizations across numerous disciplines including: public safety, school districts, healthcare systems, and long-term care facilities

- Participants in the TTX felt that it was beneficial, and found the Closed POD program beneficial as well
- The TTX identified deficiencies for improvement
- Updated the Public Health Emergency Plan as warranted based on lessons learned and changes in resources or protocols. This plan is a living document that serves as a roadmap for WOPHD during response operations
 - WOPHD also develops and maintains Mass Care plans for shelter operations
- Maintained valuable partnerships with many community and regional groups including:
 - Ozaukee County Healthcare Partners
 - Washington County Healthcare Partners
 - Local Emergency Planning Commission (LEPC)
 - Ozaukee Fire Association
 - Whole Community Preparedness Group
 - Southeast Wisconsin HERC
 - Quad County Emergency Preparedness Group
- Developed a Hazard Vulnerability Analysis (HVA) with community and regional partners
- Maintained primary and redundant communication systems:
 - Land line and cellular telephones, 800MHz radios, walkie-talkies, HAM radio systems, and the Government Emergency Telecommunications Service (GETS)
- WOPHD applied for grant as part of an inclusive planning initiative and was awarded funding to purchase two large mobile batteries to serve populations that are dependent on electronic medical devices during shelter and POD operations

Environmental Health Information and Consultation Services

WOPHD investigates complaints related to environmental health as well as provides environmental health resources to residents. Environmental Health Specialists provide consultation on private well testing, and advice on a host of issues, including air quality concerns, mold, radon, animal and insect complaints, lead and asbestos hazards, and other environmental health issues. The goal of this program is to protect the health of residents from environmental related illness and disease.

2020-- Outcomes

- Environmental health staff responded to over 1,800 public health inquiries in Washington and Ozaukee Counties

Immunization Program

WOPHD aims to reduce or eliminate vaccine preventable diseases. In 2020, **118** vaccines were administered to Washington and Ozaukee county residents to prevent infectious disease. In addition, staff work closely with school districts to assure school age children are in compliance with the Wisconsin State Immunization Law.

2019-2020 School Year Outcomes

<i>Ozaukee County School Districts</i>	<i>Percent of students compliant with WI law</i>
<i>Cedarburg</i>	<i>93</i>

<i>Grafton</i>	<i>92</i>
<i>Mequon/Thiensville</i>	<i>93</i>
<i>Northern Ozaukee</i>	<i>84</i>
<i>Port Washington/Saukville</i>	<i>90</i>

<i>Washington County School Districts</i>	<i>Percent of students compliant with WI law</i>
<i>Friess Lake</i>	<i>92</i>
<i>Germantown</i>	<i>95</i>
<i>Hartford J1</i>	<i>92</i>
<i>Hartford UHS</i>	<i>93</i>
<i>Kewaskum</i>	<i>88</i>
<i>Richfield J1</i>	<i>91</i>
<i>Slinger</i>	<i>90</i>
<i>West Bend</i>	<i>92</i>
<i>State of Wisconsin</i>	<i>91.70</i>

Seasonal Influenza

WOPHD conducts numerous community-based flu clinics to ensure our residents are protected from seasonal influenza. Influenza (flu) is a contagious respiratory disease that can lead to serious complications, hospitalization, or even death. Anyone can get the flu, and vaccinating against the flu is the single best way to prevent illness. The CDC recommends everyone 6 months of age and older is vaccinated against the flu every year. The number of residents served decreased in 2020 due to the pandemic.

2020-2021*

- WOPHD staff vaccinated **31** residents against influenza*

*Jan 1, 2020 through Dec. 31, 2020. Flu season is considered August 1, 2020 through June 30, 2021.

Lead Poisoning Prevention

Children participating in the Washington Ozaukee Public Health Department WIC program receive blood lead screenings at age 1 and again at age 2 years or older. Lead test results from private medical providers are also recorded in the child's WIC record to assure appropriate follow up and testing is completed. This program provides education on prevention of lead exposure and case management services to families of children whose confirmed lead levels are 5 mcg/dl or higher.

2020 Outcomes

<i>Indicator</i>	<i>Washington</i>	<i>Ozaukee</i>	<i>Total</i>
<i># of children tested for lead poisoning</i>	<i>725</i>	<i>757</i>	<i>1,511</i>
<i># of children screened for lead by WIC</i>			<i>65</i>
<i># of children who had elevated lead level tests over 5mcg/dl</i>			<i>28</i>
			<i>*19 cases had follow up</i>

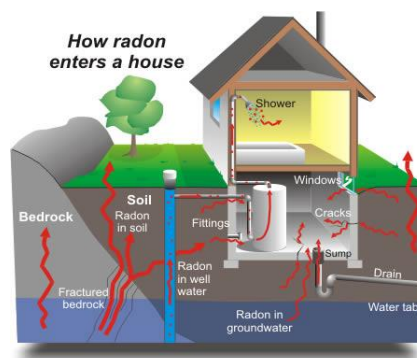
**A portion of the 28 cases of children with elevated lead levels were dropped due to a confirmatory venous draw, which showed no level at or above 5mcg/dl. A portion of the 19 follow ups were also closed due to continued monitoring causing level to drop below 5mcg/dl.*

Radon Testing

WOPHD is the designated Radon Information Center for both counties. The dollars received from the Wisconsin Division of Public Health allow health department staff to distribute free radon kits and provide radon education to county residents.

2020 Outcomes

- 8 long-term radon kits and 228 short-term kits were distributed to Washington and Ozaukee residents



Essential Service 3

Communicate effectively to inform and educate people about health, factors that influence it, and how to improve it

Essential Service 3 includes social marketing, targeted media public communication, providing accessible health information, and resources to reinforce health promotion messages and programs.

Car Seat Education and Installation

Proper car seat installation is imperative to keeping children safe while traveling in motor vehicles. WOPHD teaches families how to safely transport their children using car seats, booster seats and seat belts correctly. Child safety seats that are used correctly reduce the risk of death by as much as 71%. WOPHD provides monthly car seat clinics to the community, offering car seat checks, and education. The COVID-19 pandemic impacted our ability to perform child safety seat checks for most of the year.

2020 Outcomes

- 8 child safety seats were evaluated for proper installation.

General Health Education

WOPHD provides partnership, education, and support to local school districts, community groups and office clients, and more. Topics may include breastfeeding, nutrition and physical activity, alcohol, tobacco, substance use prevention, mental health referral assistance, growth and development, and infectious disease prevention. The majority of 2020 was spent responding to the COVID-19 pandemic which included the production of educational materials, public health guidance, and social media promotion.

2020 Outcomes

- Greatly expanded social media presence as part of COVID-19 pandemic response

- Produced and distributed the “Blueprint for Reopening Washington & Ozaukee Counties,” one of the first public publications produced in Southeast Wisconsin

Social Media Presence

The WOPHD uses social media to educate the public about health issues and concerns. Facebook and Twitter postings weekly, providing timely health information.

2020 Outcomes

- Washington Ozaukee Public Health Department Facebook
 - 3,369 page likes
 - Most posts received over 1,000 views
- WOPHD Twitter
 - 701 followers
- WOPHD Instagram
 - 99 followers

Essential Service 4

Strengthen, support, and mobilize communities and partnerships to improve health

Essential Service 4 involves convening and facilitating community groups in undertaking defined preventive and population focused activities in order to pool expertise and leverage all potential resources to solve community health problems.

Leadership Council

The Leadership Council provides foundational support to Washington County and Ozaukee County coalitions through collaboration and resource sharing. The Leadership Council is a compilation of members of Well Washington County and INVEST Ozaukee County, including: committee chairs, co-chairs, leaders representing local health systems, clinics, school districts, nonprofit organizations, and public health.

Well Washington County & INVEST Ozaukee County

Well Washington County and INVEST Ozaukee County are two independent coalitions that oversee public health activities in both counties. Each coalition uses community-based approaches to identify residents’ health priorities and works toward improving health outcomes. Well Washington County and INVEST Ozaukee County members include: community members, nonprofit organizations, businesses, government agencies, school districts, public health, and health systems. The purpose of the coalitions is to mobilize stakeholders to make a measurable impact on the health needs of Washington and Ozaukee counties.

Leveraging the expertise and resources of the larger group, Well Washington County and INVEST Ozaukee County work to sustain and improve the health of residents by promoting physical activity and

nutrition, improved mental health, prevention of youth alcohol and tobacco use, and the elimination of substance abuse. Most coalition activities were put on hold due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Well Washington County & INVEST Ozaukee County 2020 Outcomes:

- Mental Health
 - The health department received the Wisconsin Healthcare Association (WHA) Global Vision Community Partnership award the partnership between Cultivate Mental Wellness and Aurora Healthcare. The award provides recognition, financial support, and public awareness of a community health initiative or projected – created in partnership with a WHA hospital member – which successfully addresses a documented community need through creativity, innovation, partnership, and collaboration.
 - Continue support of activities including Cultivate Mental Wellness in Our Parks and Screen Free Week
 - Promoted 2-1-1 and NAMI support groups and QPR Suicide Prevention Trainings
 - Health department staff completed QPR Suicide Prevention Trainings with NAMI – Washington County
 - Transferred leadership of INVEST Mental Health to community partner at Port Washington – Saukville School District
 - Transferred leadership of Cultivate West Bend to NAMI – Washington County
- Obesity Prevention
 - Partnered with the WI Department of Health Services program, Harvest of the Month to promote buying local produce and healthy eating.
 - Continued partnership and engagement on Safe Routes to School planning committee
- Substance Abuse
 - 15 permanent medication collection sites between both counties
 - NARCAN Direct Program
 - Coordination of Ozaukee Criminal Justice Coordinating Council

Washington Ozaukee Coalition for Sexual Wellness

The Washington Ozaukee Coalition for Sexual Wellness was created in April 2019 under the leadership of the health department. The coalition was created in response to the 2018 Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS) administered in six Washington County school districts. The YRBS is a survey managed by the Department of Public Instruction meant to monitor health-related behaviors among youth. The mission of the coalition is: To advocate for sexual wellness in our communities by promoting factual, realistic information on human growth and development, sexual behaviors/education and reproductive health. Coalition activities have been put on hold due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Washington County Heroin Task Force & Ozaukee County Substance Use Task Force

The Washington County Heroin Task Force and the Ozaukee Heroin Task Force Ozaukee Substance Use Task Force were formed in response to an increase in opiate and heroin use in both counties. The long

term goal of goal of these groups is to maintain the highest quality of life through the elimination of opioid abuse, achieved by community partnerships focused on prevention, policy, education, enforcement and treatment.

Both groups consist of community participation and partnerships with many agencies across the counties including law enforcement, schools, elected officials, businesses, county departments, and volunteers. The Ozaukee Substance Use Task Force is led by the Washington Ozaukee Public Health Department. The Washington County Heroin Task Force is led by community partner, Elevate (non-profit AODA agency). Most coalition activities have been put on hold due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Ozaukee 2020 Outcomes:

- Fall Drug Take Back Day Event held at Ozaukee Transit Center
- Seven permanent medication collection sites
- Coordination of Ozaukee Criminal Justice Coordinating Council
- NARCAN Direct Program
 - 672 Doses of NARCAN provided to Ozaukee County Law Enforcement

Washington 2020 Outcomes:

- Candle Light Vigils
- Breakfast with the Board & Legislative breakfast
- Eight permanent medication drop boxes

Child Death Review Team

Child Death Review (CDR) teams meet to review and discuss circumstances involved in child deaths in both counties. The role of CDR is to determine how the death could have been prevented and if families and close contacts are offered appropriate support and resources. CDR teams provide recommendations for interventions and strategies to prevent future child death. The Washington and Ozaukee Child Death Review Teams did not meet in 2020. Meetings will tentatively resume in 2021.

Essential Service 5**Create, champion, and implement policies, plans, and laws that impact health**

Essential Service 5 involves providing leadership for systemic community and state level planning for health improvement, development and tracking of measureable health objectives as part of a continuous quality improvement strategy and development of codes, regulations and legislation to guide the practice of public health.

The Washington Ozaukee Public Health Department has started the Community Health Assessment and Community Health Improvement Planning Process with local partners and health care systems in 2019. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the CHA and CHIP have been put on hold.

Essential Service 6

Utilize legal and regulatory actions designed to improve and protect the public's health

Essential Service 6 involves full protection of drinking and recreational water supplies, enforcement of clean air standards, food safety and licensing and timely follow-up of environmental health concerns.

Beach Monitoring Program

The WOPHD monitors the public beaches in both counties through a grant from the Wisconsin DNR. Public beach water is monitored from Memorial Day through Labor Day for elevated E. Coli levels and adverse conditions. After monitoring, WOPHD uses E. Coli levels to determine beach advisories and closures, which are posted through signage and online at www.wibeaches.us. WOPHD also uses a Twitter account to post results: @OzaukeeBeach.

2020 Outcomes

Ozaukee Beach Site	Closed	Advisory	Open	Total
Upper Lake Park*	0	0	0	0
Harrington N/HWY D	2	5	54	61
Harrington S/Cedar Beach	0	4	43	47
Concordia ⁺	0	0	0	0
South Beach	0	0	31	31

*Beach was inaccessible due to high or rough water conditions

⁺Beach had no public access

Washington Beach Site	Closed	Advisory	Open	Total
Ackermann's Grove	0	1	14	15
Sandy Knoll	0	1	4	5
Leonard J. Yahr	0	0	3	3

DNR Well Water Program

WOPHD inspects and tests transient wells in Washington, Ozaukee and Milwaukee Counties through a grant from the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources. The program requires an annual test for bacteria and nitrate for any well that has public access to water for at least 25 individuals per day for at least 60 days of the year.

2020 Outcomes

- 458 establishments completed water testing; 21 had unsafe bacteria levels
 - 214 in Washington, 12 Unsafe
 - 171 in Ozaukee, 6 Unsafe
 - 73 in Milwaukee, 3 Unsafe
- 89 well system sanitary survey inspections were conducted

Food and Recreational Safety Program

The WOPHD is an agent for the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection (DATCP) and the Department of Safety and Professional Services (DPS) in Washington County. WOPHD provides inspections, consultation and licensing services for: Restaurants and Retail Food; Public Swimming Pools and Water Attractions; Hotels, Motels, Tourist Rooming Houses and Bed and Breakfasts; Tattoo and Body Piercing; and Campgrounds and Recreational/Education Campgrounds.

2020 Outcomes

Facility/Venue	# of routine inspections
Food Facilities	244
Retail Food Facilities	81
Pools	69
Lodging	26
Body Art	6
Campgrounds	2
Recreational Camps	1

- 104 licensing inspections were completed
- 83 Follow up inspections were completed
- 20 facility complaint inspections were completed

Essential Service 7

Assure an effective system that enables equitable access to the individual services and care needed to be healthy

Essential Service 7 assures effective entry for disadvantaged people to a coordinated system of care, linkage of services for special population groups, and technical assistance for effective worksite health promotion/disease prevention programs.

WIC Referrals

Women and families are referred to additional community resources based on their needs. In 2017 WOPHD implemented an evidence-based referral tool focused on mental health, alcohol, tobacco and other drugs, which was continued into 2018. Maternal and child health nurses utilized motivational interviewing to identify women who may need additional referrals for mental health, tobacco use, or substance abuse services. In 2020, there was significantly less MCH referrals due to MCH nurses prioritizing COVID-19 pandemic response efforts. However, referrals were still made at the beginning of 2020 and several later in the year.

2020—Outcomes

- 463 women or families were referred to additional resources

Migrant Health

The Migrant Health program addresses health needs of migrant workers and their families.

Approximately 120 Latino workers and their families come from southern Texas and Mexico to work at the Lakeside Foods cannery in Belgium and their produce freezing plant in Random Lake. Most workers live in one of the two “migrant camps” in Belgium during their stay in Wisconsin, working May through November. WOPHD works with Family Health LaClinica in Wautoma, WI to coordinate federal grant funds available for migrant workers’ outpatient health needs.

Oral Health

Early childhood cavities prevention services includes guidance for parents and other caregivers and distribution/provision of fluoride supplements.

2020 Outcomes

- 65 children received fluoride varnish from the Washington Ozaukee Public Health Department
 - 16 Ozaukee/49 Washington

Women, Infant, and Children (WIC) Nutrition Program

The Women Infant and Children program (WIC) promotes and maintains the health and well-being of nutritionally at-risk pregnant, breastfeeding and postpartum women, infants and children. WIC provides supplemental nutritious foods, nutrition and breastfeeding information and referral to other health and nutrition services. During 2020, WIC received waivers from USDA that included waiving the requirement for physical presence for WIC certifications and appointments. Therefore, most of 2020 WIC appointments were completed over the phone and referral data for height, weight, hemoglobin, and lead level was used for nutrition assessment. Furthermore, blood lead screenings were not performed after March 2020 and participants were encouraged to be screened for lead at their local health providers.

2020-- Outcomes

- 1,851 participants were served by WIC in both counties
- 33,420 WIC vouchers were redeemed to purchase healthy foods
- \$951,264.77 worth of healthy foods was purchased with WIC vouchers
- \$7,704 worth of vouchers were redeemed at farmer’s markets
- 76.3% of WIC mothers initiated breastfeeding post-delivery (WI average is 70.6%)
- 39% of WIC mothers were still breastfeeding at 6 months, and 23.9% at 12 months (WI average is 16.7%)
- WIC provided 53 lead screenings in both counties.

Wisconsin Well Woman Program (WWWP)

WWWP provides preventive screening services for breast and cervical cancer to low income, uninsured or underinsured women residing in Wisconsin. Women screened and diagnosed with breast or cervical cancer may be eligible for Wisconsin Well Woman Medical Assistance (WWMA) for treatment.

2020-- Outcomes

- 17 women participated in WWWP in Washington and Ozaukee Counties

Essential Service 8

Build and support a diverse and skilled public health workforce

Essential Service 8 involves educating and training personnel to meet the needs for public and personal health service; adoption of continuous quality improvement and life-long learning; and active partnership with academic institutions. In order to provide the highest quality public health service, WOPHD strives to ensure that all of our staff possesses the knowledge, skills and abilities to perform their jobs effectively and efficiently.

Linkages with Academia

The Washington Ozaukee Public Health Department has strong linkages with numerous institutions of higher education and serves as a site for student placement, observation, practice experience and internship. The majority of internship and clinical opportunities were put on hold due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

2020-- Outcomes

- WOPHD hosted two student interns early in 2020, who were later hired to assist with COVID response.
- WOPHD is represented on the Medical College of Wisconsin MPH Advisory Board
- WOPHD is represented on the Concordia University School of Nursing Advisory Board
- WOPHD hosted undergraduate nursing students for the spring and fall semester from University of Wisconsin Milwaukee for their community health course.
- Concordia University partnered on a number of Covid-19 related efforts including testing and vaccination

Essential Service 9

Improve and innovate public health functions through ongoing evaluation, research, and continuous quality improvement

Essential Service 9 calls for ongoing evaluation of health programs to assess program effectiveness and to provide information necessary for allocating resources and shaping programs.

Health and Family Services (HFS) 140 Review

The Wisconsin Department of Health Services is required to formally review the operations of all Wisconsin Local Health Departments every five years. The review establishes the health department as a level I, II, or III agency. A level I agency meets the minimum requirements and a level III meets the maximum requirements established for local health departments. As a newly merged department, WOPHD underwent a 140 Review and achieved a level III designation in the summer of 2018.

Essential Service 10

Build and maintain a strong organizational infrastructure for public health

Essential Service 10 includes continuous linkage with appropriate institutions of higher learning and research. The Washington Ozaukee Public Health Department continually fosters an environment of life-long learning, embraces evidence based interventions and applies innovative solutions to improve the health of our communities.

Innovative Partnerships & Awards

2020-- Outcomes

- The health department received the Wisconsin Healthcare Association (WHA) Global Vision Community Partnership award the partnership between Cultivate Mental Wellness and Aurora Healthcare. The award provides recognition, financial support, and public awareness of a community health initiative or projected – created in partnership with a WHA hospital member – which successfully addresses a documented community need through creativity, innovation, partnership, and collaboration.
- The health department received Character Counts Outstanding Character award from the Port Washington – Saukville Character Counts Committee for our COVID-19 pandemic response work.

COVID-19 Response

Overview

On March 11, 2020 the Washington Ozaukee Public Health Department stood up our Incident Command Structure (ICS) in order to assure we could appropriately respond to the pandemic. On March 17, 2020, WOPHD had our first case. On March 19, 2020, WOPHD had our first death in a long-term care facility. It was also the first death in Wisconsin. From that point forward the entire department was in full pandemic response.

As a result of the first death WOPHD issued orders to protect our most vulnerable including those living and working in long-term care facilities and our first responders. Our orders included:

- March 21, 2020 – [Immediate Lockdown of all Long-Term Care Facilities](#)
- March 21, 2020 – [Personal Protective Equipment](#)
- March 25, 2020 – [Long-Term Care Facility Staffing](#)
- May 18, 2020 – [Immediate Lockdown of all Long-Term Care Facilities \(modified\)](#)
- May 18, 2020 – [Long-Term Care Facility Staff \(modified\)](#)
- June 17, 2020 – [Lifted: Immediate Lockdown of all Long-Term Care Facilities](#)

Beyond the orders, the department had teams focusing on Skilled Nursing Facilities, Long-term Care Facilities, Schools (Private and Public), Child Care Providers and a general response team, communication, contact tracing, testing, business guidance and support, data management and

reporting, while core health department responsibilities also needed to continue. All health department staff stepped forward to help lead in the pandemic as well as staff from other county departments.

Communication

In addition, WOPHD leadership reviewed the 1918 flu pandemic national response and determined communication and transparency were most effective in curbing the spread of disease. As such, the WOPHD dashboard was created, which included outbreak data. Publication of outbreak data allowed WOPHD to work closely with facilities, businesses, and organizations experiencing outbreaks to assure mitigation measures were in place and there was an open line of communication. In October, the outbreak data had to be removed from the website because of a court ruling by Judge Lloyd V. Carter which limited the public release of outbreak data.

WOPHD led the state in creating and providing guidance for our long-term care facilities, businesses and organizations. First published on April 29, 2020, the Blueprint for Reopening Washington and Ozaukee Counties was based on work done by the [American Enterprise Institute](#) and can be found in Appendix A. Since the start of the pandemic, the Blueprint has been updated 17 times. Supplemental to the Blueprint, WOPHD also released capacity recommendations for our businesses and organizations. Capacity recommendations are based on the level or risk in the community and can be found in Appendix B.

Additionally, the WOPHD published the first school framework in the state. It was based on work done at Harvard, including the [COVID Risk Level map and COVID suppression guidance](#) for policy makers and the public. It can be found in Appendix C.

Lastly, WOPHD has provided robust information, resources, and COVID-related updates on the website and through social media. WOPHD also created an email specifically for COVID related questions which was also answered by members of the strategist team. The email address is covid19@washozwi.gov.

Testing

WOPHD was proactive and assured there was sufficient access to testing. A partnership between Advocate Aurora Hospital in Grafton was formed. A drive-thru test site was in place by March 12, 2020. WOPHD staff scheduled tests, completed the paperwork, AAH Grafton swabbed individuals and WOPHD transported swabs daily to the Milwaukee Health Department lab who ran the tests within 24 hours.

WOPHD hosted a mass testing event in partnership with DHS and the Wisconsin National Guard on May 28-30, 2020 and June 1-3, 2020. In order to register individuals for testing a testing hotline was created. Ten staff were tasked to schedule individuals. When testing registration went live the health department received far more calls than could be handled. Testing registration was full within three days.

National Guard testing sites were established in both counties on a weekly basis from October 12, 2020 to January 9, 2021. We also had testing sites that were run in partnership with Concordia University during this period.

When schools were re-opening in the fall, WOPHD partnered with Children's Hospital to provide testing to teachers and children who were exposed in the school setting. Children's Hospital of Wisconsin provided staff, WOPHD provided registration and scheduling management. All testing swabs were obtained from the Wisconsin State Lab of Hygiene. The testing site has since closed due to low demand.

In November, WOPHD contracted with Curative to provide a public/private partnership for testing. A Curative testing site is provided at the Washington County Fair Park and the Ozaukee County Fairgrounds Monday through Friday. The two sites will remain in place until at least May 2021.

Contact Tracing

The Washington Ozaukee Public Health Department led the state in the contact tracing response initially. WOPHD representatives sat on a DHS workgroup to determine how contact tracing would be conducted and what critical pieces of information must be collected. Over the course of the pandemic, 50 contact tracers were hired to assist and at the height of the pandemic response in November WOPHD could respond to 400 positive cases on any given day and able to maintain response to 250 positive cases a day consistently. It was still not sufficient and in mid-November, and despite referring cases to the DHS COVID Response Team, a small number of cases were never followed up on.

WOPHD identified teams to focus on contact tracing and specific populations. Response teams included Skilled Nursing Facilities, Long-term Care Facilities, Schools (Private and Public), Child Care Providers and a general response team. The email account created for COVID-related questions has allowed WOPHD to manage inquiries and request from our partners and members of the public. The email is monitored by team members assigned to general guidance.

Mitigation

The WOPHD health strategy team was critical in communicating mitigation strategies to our community partners. Health Strategists led the effort to provide guidance to all sectors of our community. Weekly and bi-weekly meetings to share updated guidance were held with the Chambers of Commerce, School Districts, and Long-Term Care Facilities.

WOPHD closely followed guidance released by the CDC and the WI DHS. In addition to the Blueprint for Reopening, we created webpages that included information for schools and the business sector.

Vaccine Distribution

The Washington Ozaukee Public Health Department began providing to vaccine eligible populations on January 6, 2020. Vaccine distribution has been an incredibly slow process due to limited vaccine distributions from the WI Department of Health Services (DHS).

Vaccine distribution has taken a great deal of strategy to ensure proper rollout to priority populations designated by DHS. The WOPHD first provided vaccine to Phase 1A eligible individuals, which included health care personnel not affiliated with a health system. On January 26, 2020, the WOPHD opened vaccine clinics to Phase 1B individuals who were aged 65 years and older. Clinics appointments were

scheduled using an online registration link. Registration would often close within 1-3 minutes due to all appointments being filled. Our department also learned that the website (www.washozwi.gov) was experiencing extremely high traffic (>47,000 visits), which at one point crashed the site for several hours. WOPHD found that the demand for vaccine has been greater than supply resulting in the removal of the public vaccine registration link in mid-February. During this time, WOPHD staff prioritized connecting seniors without access to technology to vaccine appointments by scheduling appointments over the phone.

On March 1, 2021, DHS opened vaccine eligibility more widely. DHS advised local and tribal health departments and other vaccinating organizations to continue to prioritize adults aged 65 years and older, while also prioritizing those who work in education and licensed childcare providers. WOPHD has since been working with school districts, private and parochial schools, and vaccinators to coordinate vaccine distribution for schools.

To date, the WOPHD has provided vaccine to over 4,500 individuals between Washington and Ozaukee Counties. Statewide, over one million Wisconsin residents have received the vaccine.

Data

Ahead of the WI Department of Health Services, the Washington Ozaukee Public Health Department was one of the first health departments in the state to publish a comprehensive data dashboard. The data dashboard is updated each week from Tuesday-Thursday and includes a number of data points at the local, state, and national levels. Additionally, WOPHD was one of the first health departments to publicly provide outbreak information. The information was subsequently removed after Judge Lloyd V. Carter's court ruling which restricted the public release of outbreak data.

At the request of our school district partners, the data dashboard also includes data specific to schools. The dashboard has been utilized by schools to determine when to move to in-person, hybrid, and virtual learning models.

Data has played a critical role in our community's pandemic response. It has been a driving factor behind decision-making that has impacted our schools, businesses, and organizations. The data dashboard will remain on the website for the foreseeable future.

Lessons Learned

The Washington Ozaukee Public Health Department is still in the thick of pandemic response and likely will be through 2021 and into 2022. Our department continues to focus on reporting COVID-19 positive cases, timely contact tracing, data management, messaging and communications, and vaccine distribution.

Throughout the pandemic we have learned many important lessons.

- Early implementation of the Incident Command System (ICS) was critical. The ICS model has allowed our department to pivot in a strategic way to meet the needs of the pandemic and prioritize services that are normally part of our department operations.
- Building capacity of public health workforce to meet the needs of the pandemic was vital. We did this by hiring over 50 contact tracers (CTs) in the first 12 months of the pandemic. As contact tracing is a temporary position, it was difficult to retain some of the most talented as they eventually found other jobs. However, many CTs have stayed with us and are now supporting vaccine clinics, ongoing contact tracing, and vaccine clinic registration. We also hired additional public health strategists to support communication, data management and reporting, contact tracing coordination, and vaccine distribution.
- Gaps in technology and a need to expand technological resources was found through most of the pandemic. Scheduling clients for testing as well as utilizing systems for extensive contact tracing was not always simple. And more recently, vaccine distribution has led to our greatest gap in technology. We had to change the foundations of our website and move it to a cloud-based system. Now we're exploring a 3rd program for vaccine registration. Very few, if any, health departments across the state were prepared to meet the technological challenges presented by the pandemic. We instead had to troubleshoot and adapt rapidly, often on a week-to-week basis.
- The CARES Act funding allowed our department to rapidly scale up our staffing capacity in order to provide timely testing, contact tracing, and vaccine distribution. This was critical in ensuring we had the funds to hire our contacts tracers and additional strategists.
- Equity should be at the forefront of our COVID response. Our department has been closely aligned with the WI Department of Health Services when it comes to identifying and providing access to testing and vaccination. Our department was able to further prioritize within the populations identified by DHS, to better serve high-risk individuals and migrant farmworkers. This prioritization helped to limit the number of outbreaks in a number of congregant settings, including long-term care facilities, homeless and domestic shelters, and the food chain supply industry heavily supported by migrant workers.
- As the pandemic hasn't impacted all populations equally, prioritization of high-risk populations per state guidance has been important. This includes working with our partners to ensure that those over the age of 65 are first in line for receiving vaccines, as well as our frontline health workers.
- A nimble staff team to respond to challenges as they arise during the pandemic is vital. No two weeks were the same in the challenges we faced, and having staff that were open and ready to respond to any challenge we faced was paramount in our pandemic response.
- Finally, as our community has gone through deep socioeconomic challenges over the past month, it will be critical to complete our Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP) in 2021. This will provide a community inclusive framework to be sure we're responding to the new and historic needs of both Washington and Ozaukee counties.

Appendices

Appendix A

[Blueprint for Reopening Washington and Ozaukee Counties](#)

Appendix B

[Capacity Recommendations](#)

Appendix C

[School Framework](#)